



Childhood Connections

May 6, 2025

### **Spotlight on Office of Childhood Teams!**

Throughout 2025, this newsletter will spotlight team members who work in the Office of Childhood (OOC) and their “why” for supporting children, families, and the professionals who work directly with them.



Christine Wynn is the Program Manager of the Child Care Regulations section. In this role, she leads the team that helps child care providers meet background check, director certification, and program evaluation requirements. The team also supports the Child Care Compliance section with systems, staff training, and development of rules and procedures in accordance with state and federal requirements, as well as best practices for children’s health and safety. Christine has served children and families in various roles within state government for the past 21 years. Her “why” is driven by a passion to ensure that children grow and thrive in safe, supportive environments.

Shelby Koetting is a Program Coordinator within the Child Care Regulations section. Her responsibilities include reviewing evaluations of child care programs across the State to assess licensing requirements. Additionally, she supervises a team of three that assists child care providers with director certification and collaborates with the Child Care Compliance section on child care systems, staff training, and the development of rules and procedures. Shelby has been dedicated to the early childhood sector since 2012, having served as a



classroom teacher and center director at various programs, including Early Head Start. Since 2019, she has been serving children, families, and child care providers in state government. Her motivation is ensuring all children have access to safe and healthy child care opportunities that support their development and growth.



Bridgette Limbach is a Program Coordinator in the Child Care Regulations section. In this role, she supervises a team of four as they process the comprehensive background checks on all child care staff members in licensed and regulated child care facilities across the state. Bridgette has worked within Child Care Regulations since 2010. As a mother of three, she is driven by the importance of safe and nurturing child care programs

### **UPDATE! Revision of Child Care Licensing Rules (Executive Order 25-15)**

In April, OOC wrapped up listening sessions related to the revision of child care licensing rules in support of [Executive Order 25-15](#) issued by Governor Kehoe. We would like to thank all the stakeholders who attended the listening sessions across the state. OOC is analyzing the feedback provided and will meet with the task force group in May to share information collected.



### **Early Childhood Integrated Data System**

Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) is presently unavailable and is currently under evaluation.

Please visit [the Child Care Licensing Rule Revision webpage](#) to keep up to date with the work to revise the child care licensing rules.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT! DESE E-Learnings Improved and Easier to Access**

DESE E-learnings are now easier to find and complete in the MOPD System. There are multiple ways to access DESE E-learning.

1. The easiest way is immediately after registering for a course- click the button to 'Enter the Classroom'.
2. To complete an e-learning course later- from your main MOPD profile page, scroll down to the Training section and click 'Launch Class'.
3. If you registered for multiple E-learning courses and do not see the Launch Class button for that course, click the 'View All My Training' button.

The Training Information page will appear with a list of upcoming training sessions. Find the E-learning training you wish to take. Click the Manage button, which creates a drop-down list. Click E-learning with a picture of a graduation cap. Whichever option above is used to access the E-learning, a new "Classroom Registrant Detail" page appears. Scroll down to the Classroom Modules section. Click "Start".

See full written instructions for the topic at '[Complete a DESE E-Learning Course](#)' or [video instructions](#).

### **UPDATE! Child Care Data System**

The OOC is happy to announce that phase one of the Child Care Data System migration process has been completed as of March 2025.

OOO will begin working on the phase 2 requirements of the system beginning April 2025. Two main priorities for phase 2 are paying on enrollment and prospectively.

Paying on enrollment and prospectively are federal requirements for all states, however, like many other states, Missouri has requested and been granted a waiver. This waiver gives Missouri until August 2026 to fully implement paying on enrollment and prospectively. OOC is hoping to see these two items

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

### **CELEBRATE! National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day**

[National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day](#) is on May 8, highlighting the importance of children's mental health. Mental health issues are prevalent, with one in six children aged 2 to 8 diagnosed with a disorder.

This day aims to support children with serious mental illnesses and their families, encouraging therapy for conditions like ADHD, anxiety, and behavioral disorders to improve their quality of life.

### **CELEBRATE! Child Care Provider Appreciation Day**

This year, Child Care Provider Appreciation Day is on May 9, 2025.

On this day and every day, we want to take a moment to thank child care providers for your dedication to providing early care and education services and for the important role you play in our children's future.

You are truly appreciated

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY HEAD START! Celebrating 60 Years**

in the 2026 state budget so we can begin implementing paying on enrollment and prospectively.

### **UPDATE! Child Care Compliance and Regulation Data Dashboard**

OOC's Child Care Compliance and Regulation sections recently posted [a data dashboard for the first quarter of 2025](#). This data dashboard highlights information about the licensed and license-exempt child care landscape, including the number of regulated child care facilities, child care slots, pending facilities, inspection and complaint investigations, time to get licensed, and more.

New data dashboards are posted throughout the year on [the Child Care Compliance and Regulation Data Dashboard webpage](#).

### **ANNOUNCEMENT! Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council (MODDC) for a Storytelling Initiative**

The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council (MODDC) has awarded a grant to Tonal Range Media for a storytelling project to highlight the experience of Missourians with intellectual disabilities or developmental disabilities and their families. The project aims to allow readers to understand the daily life and barriers faced by individuals with disabilities.

Individuals or families who might be interested can [complete the Storyteller Interest survey](#).

Individuals or families may also be nominated as a storyteller through [the same form](#). Submissions are due June 1, 2025. One person or family from each county will be selected to participate in this important project. Others will receive instruction on writing their own stories and how to share them with the possibility of having their stories shared in a later stage of the project.

### **NEW! Developmental Screening Promotional Materials**

[Developmental Screening documents](#) were created to assist communities with the promotion of annual developmental screenings for young children. The goal is to increase awareness and understanding of

May 18, 2025, is Head Start's 60th birthday! Head Start programs prepare America's most vulnerable young children to succeed in school and in life beyond the school years.

Head Start programs deliver services to children and families in areas of early learning, health, and family well-being while engaging parents as partners every step of the way.

Learn more about the history of Head Start on the [Head Start Timeline](#).

### **ANNOUNCEMENT! May is National Water Safety Month**

According to the American Red Cross, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury deaths for children ages 1-4.

Practice and promote water safety all year round with these [water safety tips](#) and [water safety resources](#).

### **NEW! Service Description Codes Reference Guide**

The Child Care Subsidy section has added a Service Description Codes Reference Guide to the child care subsidy payments website. This guide explains what each letter of the service description codes used on invoices means to ensure subsidy-



developmental screening best practices, promote effective referral processes and to connect families to available resources.

Suggested partners for this work include local hospitals, health departments, pediatrician offices, child care programs and home visiting programs.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT! Opportunity to be a Member for ECSAC**

The Missouri Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) currently has four vacant slots that are reserved for parents and one vacant slot for a representative of a local educational agency in Missouri. These are voluntary positions, appointed by the governor.

These positions advise and assist DESE in serving children from birth to kindergarten entry, including children who have developmental delays and disabilities. They promote the mission for Missouri to provide appropriate family-centered service delivery system that promotes optimal child development.

Apply online at [the Missouri Boards and Commissions webpage](#).

### **ANNOUNCEMENT! Growing Healthy Communities: Early Childhood Edition Podcast**

The Department of Mental Health (DMH), Children's Office, in partnership with the Missouri Head Start have released the third episode of the Growing Healthy Communities podcast.

[Growing Healthy Communities: Early Childhood Edition podcasts](#) feature licensed professionals and individuals with lived experience presenting on topics identified by parents, caregivers, and community members on Missouri youth and families. They are designed to support parents and community members to better care for Missouri youth.

The third episode features an interview with [Dr. Barbara Stroud](#) discussing her experiences and insights into boosting safety, empowerment, and self-determination for children and parents. Melody Boling, Early Childhood Wellness Coordinator in the DMH Children's Office and Carolyn Stemmons,

contracted providers understand their payments.

You can find a link to the guide on the [Child Care Subsidy webpage](#) under "How much will the state pay?"

### **NEW! 2022 Autism Spectrum Disorder Prevalence Report**

[The 2022 Autism Spectrum Disorder Prevalence Report](#) has been released by the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network. This report includes [key findings for Missouri on Autism and Developmental Disabilities](#).

All of the materials associated with the school year 2022 data release and an updated Family Resources Page can be found on the [Fitzgerald Neuroepidemiology Lab's](#) webpage.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT! Upcoming Training Opportunity**

Upcoming free, virtual training sessions provided by the Center for Child Well-Being 'Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder'. Attendees will receive on clock hours.

See this [Overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder virtual session flyer](#) for training

Assistant Director with the Missouri Head Start Collaboration Office co-host the interview.

## ANNOUNCEMENT! Conference on the Young Years Call for Presentation Proposals



OOC is now accepting presentation proposals for the Conference on the Young Years (CYY) 2026. The conference dates are March 5-7, 2026, at Tan Tar A Conference Center in Osage Beach, MO.

Our goal is to provide participants with the opportunity to discuss appropriate practices, share ideas, and receive developmental information on early childhood (Birth-third grade). All sessions should be one hour in length.

If selected the lead presenter and one co-presenter will receive complimentary registration. All other costs, including lodging, will be at the presenter's expense. The co-presenter must be listed on the proposal at the time of submission.

Please note that selling or promoting materials during the presentation is **strictly prohibited**. Presenters may rent a booth space in the exhibit hall for this purpose. More information will be available on the [OOC CYY webpage](#).

Presentation Proposals must be submitted via electronic survey. To submit a proposal, use the link on the CYY webpage. The deadline to submit a proposal is July 1, 2025.

## Monthly MOPD Quick Tip

Child care providers, substitutes or staff floaters do not need to change their primary employment each time their employment changes. Floaters or substitutes can have multiple current employer records. However, one must be listed as primary employment.

dates and additional information.

## REMINDER! Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Missouri

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Missouri is available in every zip code in Missouri. Children birth to age 5 years can be registered by their parent or guardian to receive one free book per month.

There is no cost to families and there is no limit on how many children in Missouri can sign up.

Parents can register their children at [Check Availability at the Imagination Library webpage](#).

See full instructions at [Missouri Professional Development System](https://missouriprofessionaldevelopment.com) or email [MOPD@dese.mo.gov](mailto:MOPD@dese.mo.gov) with questions.

## Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.



Joplin Parents as Teachers (PAT) recently contributed to a statewide study of the academic benefits of PAT. Researchers at the University of Missouri's Institute of Public Policy used data from the Joplin PAT alongside other Missouri programs to study outcomes of children who participate in Missouri's Parents as Teachers.

"We are so proud to have contributed to this research," said Joplin Parents as Teachers Director Kerri Clouse. "We have definitely seen beneficial results in our own program here in Joplin. Our parent educators work to give local kiddos a chance to succeed, while sharing resources and support with their families to bolster those chances of success. We're honored to help Joplin's families in this way, and excited to continue preparing kids and families for great futures."

Researchers found children who participate in PAT receive earlier access to Individualized Education Programs when needed, have a higher probability of proficient scores on the Missouri Assessment Program tests, and overall better educational outcomes compared to students that had fewer program interactions. Researchers noted that "findings indicate increased exposure to

the Missouri PAT was positively associated with third-grade academic achievement in all children, including those from low-income families.”

“I always say, if you’re cautious, because we understand that someone is coming into your home, try it,” said Kerri Clouse.

## OOC Monthly Stakeholder Webinar

Join us for the next OOC Stakeholder webinar on **Tuesday, May 27, 2025**, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

A [recording](#) and [the PowerPoint slides](#) from the April 2025 webinar are available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information.

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at [Childhood@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Childhood@dese.mo.gov).

## Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

[Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.](#)

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DESE Office of Childhood | 205 Jefferson Street - 1st Floor | Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

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